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Program in Japan

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Carrying Out Christ's Program in Japan

BY

REV. J. EDGAR KNIPP

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NOTES

How Pronounce Japanese Names. Remember that all syllables end in a vowel or n, like Hon-do. Pronounce consonants as in English and vowels as follows: A as a in father; e as a in care; i as the first e in eve; o as o in old and u as oo in food.

Location of Our U. B. Work. Notice on the map that our two centers, where at present our missionaries live, are To-kyo (sometimes spelled To-ki-o) and Kyo-to (or Ki-o-to); Chi-ba district and Shi-ga district are our rural fields and we educate our pastors in the Do-shisha University at Kyo-to.

Carrying Out Christ's Program in Japan

Changing Japan Challenges Your Whole-hearted Cooperation

"Old Japan is dying, new Japan is being born," said the Japanese professor of English literature at the Kyo-to Imperial College when I asked him about the outlook for Christianity. "All who are interested should do their best to help her now," he continued. He himself, a most earnest Christian, has been doing his best by translating into Japanese such books as Rauschenbush's "Social Principles of Jesus" and Fosdick's "Meaning of Faith" and "Meaning of Prayer," volumes having a wide circulation among Japanese students.

In 1859 when the first Protestant missionaries landed in Japan Christianity was an outlawed religion and as late as 1868 to 1872 over two thousand Catholic Christians lost their lives through exposure and torture rather than renounce their Lord. Now religious liberty is guaranteed by the national constitution and Christianity, although numbering on the rolls of all the churches less than one-half of one percent of the whole population, is publicly recognized as one of the three religions of Japan.

In estimating the forces back of Japan's astounding progress during the past fifty years he who fails to recognize the strategic place occupied by Guido Verbeck, one of the early missionaries, has omitted a most influential factor. He, it was, that first suggested the plan for Japan's system of national education and to him may be attributed the clause in the first educational code which reads: "It is intended hencefore (without any distinction of class or sex) in a village there shall be no house without learning and in a house no individual without learning." It was Verbeck's great influence that doubtless caused Prince Ito to say, "Japan's progress and development are largely due to the influence of missionaries exerted when Japan was first studying the outer world."

Another great contribution made by Christianity to Japan's welfare was the projection into its polytheistic atmosphere of the conception of a personal, loving Heavenly Father, interested in all men and working with men to bring about a better world.

This truth coupled with Jesus' emphasis upon the supreme value of the individual has doubtless done much to produce the present unrest in Japan. The growing movement for universal male suffrage, the tremendous emphasis upon the rights of the laboring men, the new standards regarding

marriage, concubinage and divorce, the growing agitation against the social evil and for nation-wide prohibition of the liquor traffic—these and other moral and political reforms have as their background and vitalizing power the Christian conception of the supreme value of personality.

Social, industrial, political, and moral problems await solution today in Japan. The ideals and standards of the past are losing their hold upon multitudes of the rising generation. The young people do not know how to save themselves from the great moral and spiritual perils of this transitional period. Buddha has failed them, Shintoism cannot help them. Who but Christ can save them?

What We Are Aiming To Do

In the midst of these changing conditions the Christian Church in Japan is seeking to carry out the program of our Lord Jesus. Our aim as United Brethren Christians in Japan is to be of real service in helping people to know God as their Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, and then to become like Christ in serving their fellowmen.

In Japan the Christian Church faces an acute situation. By inspiring folks to do their part in the spirit of Jesus, Japan will be helped to solve her many problems and the coming of the Kingdom of God will be hastened.

I Our Work for the Young

(1) *Through Sunday Schools.* At the present time we are influencing hundreds of homes through the two thousand boys and girls and young people enrolled in our twenty-eight Sunday schools. Owing to the wonderful interest awakened everywhere throughout Japan by the Tokyo World's Sunday-school convention it would easily be possible for us to double this enrollment if we had better equipment.

We believe with Dr. Walter Scott Athearn that "that which is put into the first of life is put into all life" and so are seeking in every possible way to increase our efficiency as a mission along this line of work.

We are seriously handicapped by the fact that at present more than half of our Sunday schools meet in ordinary Japanese dwelling houses or in chapels which are entirely too small. Japan has a fine, modern public school system with over 25,000 grade schools having suitable, large and commodious buildings with modern equipment. For the work of its religious education ought not the Christian Church be as well equipped?

As a demonstration we may well be proud of the fact that on the faculty of the Do-shi-sha University our representative, Rev. B. F. Shively, has charge of the department of religious education in the theological school and that all of the young men who take the full theological course

pursue under his direction studies which prepare them for leadership in this important work.

Again we may well rejoice that one of our To-kyo pastors is a member of the executive committee of the Japanese National Sunday-school Association. Two of our pastors, Rev. C. Ya-su-da and Rev. Y. O-no, are presidents of their large local city Sunday-school associations, while Rev. K. Ya-be is the secretary of the Shi-ga Provincial Sunday School Association.

Through the united efforts of the National Sunday School Association and the Sunday school committee of the federated missions conference splendid graded material is available in the Japanese language. There is no lack of children ready to come to the Sunday schools. Our chief difficulty is to prepare suitable teachers and to secure adequate equipment in the matter of suitable buildings.

So great has been the emphasis upon Sunday school work in Japan and so successful the efforts of the Christian workers that the Buddhists have been thoroughly aroused and are aggressively conducting a nation-wide campaign to organize such schools in the Buddhist temples. Although they are using Christian tunes and hymns in which they substitute the word "Buddha" for "Jesus," and give out picture cards patterned after our Bible pictures, we need to remember that the Bible is not part of their teaching and although they may be able to cultivate a religious spirit among the young, the contents of their instruction lacks the essential elements of salvation which Jesus brings. The Buddhist activity should shame us, ought it not, over our failure up to the present to provide Christian training for the vast multitudes in Japan whom Jesus loves just as much as he loves American boys and girls?

2. *Through Christian Kindergartens.* At present our United Brethren Church is carrying on five kindergartens; two in To-kyo, one in Ma-tsu-do, one Ze-ze, and one in O-tsu. As a result of our survey we decided to at least double this number.

Besides the deep religious impressions made upon the hearts of the children of from four to six years of age that come to our kindergartens, we are at the same time helping many adults. If you ask how, just call to mind the fact that these boys and girls carry home from the kindergartens not only some things which they make there, but the truths which they learn, including the songs.

Through the interest which we show in the children the parents come to understand better the Christian spirit. The attitude of a whole community may be changed by the opening of a Christian kindergarten. Prejudice, opposition and misunderstanding may be removed. In Japan many educated people do not think much of religion, but they value education. Once I met a Japanese on an interurban car who seemed to be anxious to speak to me. In the course of the conversation I learned that about twelve years before, his youngest child had started to go to a

Christian kindergarten in Kobe. Through the visits of the teachers in his home he had gradually come to understand what Christianity is and as his other children followed the first one, he himself, after about five or six years, decided to join the church.

The doubling of our kindergartens will bring about another fine result. Namely, a corresponding increase in the number of our trained Sunday-school teachers, for the kindergartners teach in our Sunday schools and sometimes conduct Sunday schools during the week at places which we cannot touch on Sundays owing to the lack of a sufficient number of workers. On this account our aim is to make just as efficient as possible the kindergartens we have and to increase their number year by year. Ko-be, Kyo-to, Ku-sa-tsu, and another one in the Chi-ba district are on the waiting list.

The majority of our kindergarten children come from non-Christian homes, where, instead of the family altar of prayer, the father and mother or grandfather and grandmother offer up prayers morning and evening before the household Buddhist images and at the same time perhaps before the Shinto household shrine.

Some of the most fruitful work now being done by our Church in Japan is what we are doing for the kindergarten boys and girls. We may not see all the results for many years, but we are satisfied to remember that *"we are commencing, not finishing."* Our aim is to help lay well the foundation of a Christian nation and of a Christian church, believing that in God's good time a temple worthy of our Lord Jesus will arise to his honor and glory in the Japanese Empire.

II Winning Converts, Organizing and Developing Churches

1. *Mothers' Meetings.* One of the helpful points of contact between the kindergartens and the homes of the children is the meetings held once a month for the mothers. At times addresses are given by doctors and dentists regarding the care of their children's teeth and bodies. Their religious training and similar subjects of vital interest to the mothers are also presented. They are taught the songs used in the kindergartens so that they may sing them with their children. One day an old grandmother came to the Sunday school and asked one of the kindergarten teachers to teach her the songs that her grandchild was learning so that she too could sing them.

At times the direct evangelistic message is given at the mothers' meetings, but probably even more effective are the messages which the boys and girls carry home from day to day and from week to week. For instance, sometimes when visiting in the homes our lady missionaries and the kindergarten teachers are told how O'Hana San (Miss Flower) came home and told her father at the supper table they should not begin to eat

before returning thanks to God just as they do at kindergarten before they eat lunch.

(2) *Evangelistic and Personal Work.* Two or three nights in succession at different times during the year, series of evangelistic meetings are held. The Sunday evening services are as a rule evangelistic in character.

Some of our Sunday schools plan their Christmas and Children's Day exercises in such a way that a strong evangelistic impression will be made. It is on such occasions as a rule that we have the largest attendance of those who know little about the real message of Christianity.

It is still true in Japan that the largest number of inquirers are gained through the personal work done by those who already are members of the church. I recall a mechanic and also a copier of court records, neither one of whom was well educated, who were busy in season and out of season inviting the men with whom they associated to come to the church. Their earnest efforts were fruitful of splendid results.

When a number of inquirers have been secured, our pastors form classes for special Bible instruction so that the converts may be well prepared for church membership.

(3) *Newspaper Evangelism.* A good plan for reaching the multitudes still beyond the influence of the Christian Church is that of inserting gospel material in the newspapers. At O-tsu, Mr. Ya-be does this each week in two of the leading newspapers which circulate not only in that provincial capital, but widely in the surrounding territory. At the end of the article an offer is made to send Christian literature free to those who desire to study Christianity. Requests are constantly being received for such material.

Not long ago a young man came to our O-tsu Church from the bad section of the city, saying that he had seen Mr. Ya-be's article in the paper and wanted to lead a different life. (From that time he has been coming to church regularly.) After a service conducted by our O-tsu pastor, a young teacher from the neighboring school came up and said that he always watched for the weekly Christian message in the O-tsu newspaper. This shows how we are touching lives far beyond the direct influence of the local church.

In Chi-ba district Mr. Hayes has occasionally done such work and he wants soon to make it a permanent part of his evangelistic campaign. The Newspaper Evangelism Committee of the Federated Missions Conference has drawn up a plan, the object of which is to reach the masses throughout Japan, both in the country districts, in the towns and cities. This promising nation-wide plan, owing to lack of financial support from America, has not been tried. When it is inaugurated, I believe that our United Brethren churches with the others will reap good return. Since

practically every Japanese home is within access of the newspaper and everybody, comparatively speaking, from the coolie who pulls the jinrikisha to the capitalist whose influence largely determines the foreign policy of the government, reads the daily paper, can the Christian Church afford not to utilize this circulating medium that will carry to multitudes beyond the voice of the preacher, Christ's wonderful message of salvation?

The tremendous need for a statesmanlike evangelistic program is emphasized by the answers received in response to a questionnaire sent out not long ago by the Social Welfare Bureau of the national government to one thousand working men of all trades and ranks. Of those who replied 191 said they were Buddhists, 143 Shintoists, 150 said they had no religion, many belong to various cults and new sects that have appeared, while only 12 declared themselves Christians. In view of this appalling religious need we all may well rejoice that God is opening new doors before Japanese Christians who are writers.

(4) *Bible Classes.* Both our Japanese pastors and missionaries find the Bible class a most fruitful means of winning converts for Christ. Many of the strongest Christian leaders today in Japan were won through English Bible classes. There is a demand for them everywhere.

This is one reason why our Japan mission has asked and the foreign mission board has decided to grant the doubling of our missionary force. Less than 200 yards from our Tokyo Compound there are seven large student dormitories. These young men attend the Kei-o University. Students are crowding into homes in that neighborhood wherever they can get a room. Notwithstanding this great opportunity, all that we can do at present is to permit our country evangelistic missionary, Rev. Warren H. Hayes, to devote one evening each week to teach a Bible class for students in his own home.

One new missionary family ought to be in To-kyo just as early as possible to take up this student work and to cooperate with three of our To-kyo churches in other ways.

Down in Shi-ga province also a man and his wife are urgently needed to give their time to work among students. In O-tsu there is a government commercial school which has recently been raised to high school grade. English will be emphasized. There are also two schools for girls (one for craft and domestic science training, while the other is a combination of high and normal school) with 500 students of whom about 250 are in the dormitories. In Ze-ze, a suburb of O-tsu, there is the provincial normal school for young men with an attendance of over 300. They come from all the thirteen counties of the province. Near it is a high school with over 500 boys and young men.

Besides all these government schools we, as a Church, have a night school for boys and young men in O-tsu where we are seeking to help

those who, on account of the poverty of their parents, are forced to leave school after completing the grades. Many of them, though working all day in offices, stores, or factories, are very ambitious and with proper training will make active Christians. For instance, one of our O-tsu night school graduates is now attending the Do-shi-sha Theological school and is actively at work in the O-tsu Sunday school. Several others are teachers.

Mr. Hayes writes that in the fall of 1920 three college students who had been attending his Bible class for four years were baptized. All are holding positions of influence. Two of them have each opened the way in the cities where they now live, for English Bible classes to be conducted in the high schools.

(5) *An Organized Annual Conference.* Our local churches are being developed just as rapidly as possible into strong centers of evangelistic efforts. Some of them have strong women's societies, and efficient young people's organizations. Others are more like Christian Endeavor societies themselves. The weekly system of giving to current expenses and to the benevolent interests is becoming more and more popular.

Although our Japan mission annual conference is by no means large, it has a fine esprit de corps. It wrestles with many of the same problems that puzzle the minds and hearts of our ministers and laymen in America.

Through the agitation and initiative of our beloved Brother Takejiro Ishiguro, who did such valiant work for Jesus before he fell asleep in 1918, a conference board of administration was organized and is now actively at work. One problem that it is tackling with vigor is the securing of larger funds for conference benevolences. Another is how to secure suitable equipment in the way of suitable buildings for growing churches and parsonages. A number of our local churches are now busy raising funds for buildings.

III Enlisting and Training Workers for Service

We, your representatives, recognize that "the church is not a field, but a force." However, before a person, brought up in a land where idolatry and superstition abound as in Japan, can follow the example of service to his fellowmen which Jesus taught and illustrated, he needs to know a good deal of gospel truth. And he also needs to see a life of such service lived out before his eyes. (That is another reason why we wish to double our missionary force.)

That is one great privilege the foreign missionary has. But pastors like Ta-ke-ji-ro I-shi-gu-ro and Ki-yo-shi Ya-be, filled with the spirit of Jesus Christ, soon become even better witnesses to their fellowmen of Jesus' example of service and before long they gather about them young people whose hearts too become filled with the same spirit of self-sacrificing devotion to the cause of the Kingdom of God.

Everyone becomes filled with the spirit of service and of helpfulness. Not only the teachers and older Christians, but the young men in the English Bible class and even the boys and girls are anxious to help. The church is a very bee-hive of activity for Jesus. The influences for good radiating from such a center no one can measure, and only eternity can reveal.

One of the greatest joys of a missionary's life is to have this gracious privilege of being like Jesus in calling men and women into the service of the Kingdom. One of the hardest things, however, for him to endure is to be forced to see opportunity after opportunity slip by because the home churches have failed to provide the equipment and means needed to seize those same opportunities.

(1) *Serving the Community.* Our aim is to help each Christian and each local church to be of some real service to the community. Through our twenty-eight Sunday schools and our five kindergartens we are helping to give religious training to many boys and girls and young people.

During the next five years we ought to at least double the number of our kindergartens and to increase the number of our Sunday schools to at least fifty. This will necessitate the enlistment and the training of many new teachers.

In one of the great industrial centers of To-kyo where the people are crowded together, we have a small chapel. In connection with our work there we wish to establish a day nursery and to employ a nurse to visit in the homes of the poor. In connection with another of the To-kyo churches—this one is located in the heart of the business section of To-kyo —we want to carry on institutional work to help the young men of the community. A night school, social gatherings and other special features ought soon to be inaugurated. To cooperate with the pastor we ought to have an experienced missionary who knows the best methods which have been tried and proven successful in America under similar circumstances.

Mr. Ya-be's ambition for our O-tsu night school is that it may grow into an industrial school where poor young men may earn at least half of their way through school by working some hours daily. This might be accomplished by starting something like the industrial department of Albert Academy.

(2) *Training the Workers.* In a number of our churches Sunday school teacher training classes have been conducted. Each summer since 1916 a Lake Biwa summer school (or boys' and young men's camp) enrolling between forty and fifty boys and young men has been conducted for a week in August. From these gatherings we are expecting some of our best pastors and laymen.

At the present time in the Do-shi-sha University we have theological students who are getting ready for the Christian ministry under the direc-

tion of Rev. B. F. Shively. A conference student committee is seeking to emphasize in the churches the claims of the ministry and other Christian callings upon Christian young people.

Instead of as at present, having but three young women in training schools for kindergarten work, we must soon have at least six each year. The number of our theological students should soon be doubled. Our great need is to have a much larger number of well trained pastors able to be real leaders in developing the local churches and in enlisting and training the young and old for Christian service.

IV Our Workers and Our Equipment

We whose hearts yearn for the redemption of Japan are grateful for all that our United Brethren Church has done for that land. Our contribution as a denomination has not been nearly as large as that of some others and yet we believe that in opening up work there in 1895 we were "obedient to the heavenly vision."

(1) *What We Now Have.* At the present time our Church has sixteen Japanese pastors, ten kindergarten teachers, 120 Sunday-school teachers and officers and three missionary families. By no means least of the influences we exert for the salvation of Japan is that wholesome influence which radiates from the Christian homes of all the above workers.

Beginning in the Chi-ba district (see map and note on the pronunciation of Japanese names) our present equipment includes the following: At Fu-na-ba-shi a chapel and parsonage. In the capital city of To-kyo we have two substantial, commodious missionary residences or parsonages, and a fine compound (one of the residences is occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Hayes); church houses at Shi-mo Shi-bu-ya, Ha-ra-ju-ku, and Hon-jo; Japanese-style chapels at Ni-hom-ba-shi, the business center of To-kyo, and at O-ku-bo, where we have also parsonages.

Between To-kyo and Kyo-to we have a church and parsonage at Shi-zu-o-ka and a Japanese-style chapel at Nu-ma-zu. In the Shi-ga district we have a church at Ze-ze and a student dormitory at Ba-ba which is a suburb of O-tsu, the capital.

In Kyo-to we have the First Church building and also a chapel for the Second Church and a splendid missionary residence near the Do-shi-sha University, occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Shively and family.

(2) *What We Must Have.* For our Church to fulfill its God-given mission in Japan we must have more workers and better equipment. At present twelve of our churches occupy Japanese dwelling houses. Three of these we own and nine we rent. These nine are at No-da, Ma-tsu-do, I-chi-ka-wa, O-da--wa-ra, Na-go-ya, O-tsu, Ku-sa-tsu, O-sa-ka and Ko-be. In this age when Japan has been recognized as one of the five great

powers of the world, do you think we, as a Church, can hope to win our share of that nation to Christ with such poor equipment? Could our pastors and churches in America do efficient work if they were forced to depend upon parsonages for the meetings of their congregations?

After Dr. C. W. Brewbaker's visit to Japan, he expressed his convictions in these words in the Telescope of January 8, 1921: "We cannot hope to grow and do the work we ought to as a Church until we have the necessary workers and equipment." With him you, too, would agree if you could only see things as they are today in Japan.

Space does not permit a detailed statement of our urgent needs for buildings. I shall refer briefly to but three places, namely, Ko-be, Ma-tsu-do, and O-tsu. They will serve to illustrate the present situation.

(*a*) *Ko-be.* Last fall the foreign mission board cabled to buy the lot available for this church. They are still worshipping in an ordinary dwelling house. Not far away is a large, commodious public school building. Ko-be itself is a city of over 400,000 people, where they have all sorts of up-to-date enterprises—large banks, stores, factories, schools, and public buildings. You may readily imagine how handicapped our pastor, Rev. Y. O-no, is with such poor equipment. The purchase of the lot brought great joy and encouragement to him and his people, who are doing their best to raise all they can for the new church building, so urgently needed.

(*b*) *Ma-tsu-do.* This town is the center of our work in Chi-ba district, with its population depending upon our Church alone for the Gospel. Unless we do a typical Christian work here and become of real service to the community we cannot expect to win in our efforts to establish Christian centers throughout this district.

As soon as possible we ought to put up a missionary residence here for Mr. and Mrs. Hayes. This would be a great saving of time for them and make it possible for them to do much more effective work.

At Ma-tsu-do we must also have soon a suitable building for church, Sunday school, kindergarten, and community-service purposes.

(*c*) *O-tsu.* Here we need a missionary residence and a Christian social center for night school, kindergarten, public lectures, as well as for Sunday school and church services. O-tsu is the capital of Shi-ga province and has a population of over 42,000 people. Christian work well done here will not only have a great influence in our own Shi-ga district, but throughout the whole province.

The fact that here in O-tsu we have in Rev. Ki-yo-shi Ya-be an exceptionally strong and well trained Japanese pastor and leader, makes it all the more imperative that we have this greatly needed equipment just as early as possible.

To quote Dr. Brewbaker again, after he had enumerated the various urgent needs of our work, he wrote: "The foregoing seems like a big program of expansion and it is. Japan must be won to Christ through the process of teaching and evangelism. The teachers and evangelists must be educated Japanese, taught and trained by well-qualified pastors and missionaries. Modern kindergarten and Sunday school work must have a big place in this program. It is no easy task. But the United Brethren Church has many men and women who each could furnish the means to equip any of the places mentioned."

V. Our Lord's Expectation

For our salvation our Lord Jesus gave all He had without reserve. He lived and died that we, as He said, "might have life and might have it in abundance." This abundant life the vast majority of Japanese boys and girls, young people and men and women, has not yet received.

One of our Japanese young men who is now preparing for Christian service recently wrote: "Every day I feel my responsibility to Japan. Jesus is knocking at her door. It is time for Japan to open her heart to Jesus." In a similar way He knocks at your heart and mine, asking that we do our part in providing the workers and in giving the equipment. *What shall be our response?*

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